

Saturday



Magazine.

No 114.

APRIL

12TH, 1834.

PRICE
ONE PENNY.

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION,
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.



CREW OF THE MEDUSA ON THE RAFT.
From the Picture by GERCAULT.

THE SHIPWRECK OF THE MEDUSE.

THE French possessions on the west coast of Africa, extending from Cape Blanco to the mouth of the Gambia, having been restored at the General Peace, in 1814, an expedition, consisting of a frigate and three other vessels, was sent, in the month of June 1816, to take possession of them. It was complete in all its parts, as the French expeditions usually are, including men of science, artisans, agriculturists, gardeners, miners, &c., amounting, with the troops, to nearly four hundred persons, exclusive of the crews. The naval part was intrusted to M. de Chaumareys, who had the command of the frigate, *La Méduse*, of forty-four guns.

Owing to a very relaxed state of discipline, and ignorance of the common principles of navigation, this frigate was suffered to run aground on the bank of Arguin. Attempts were made to get her off, but it was soon discovered that all hopes of saving her must be abandoned, and that nothing remained but to concert measures for the escape of the passengers and crew. Some biscuit, wine, and fresh water, were accordingly got up and prepared for putting into the boats, and upon a Raft which had been hastily constructed; but, in the tumult of abandoning the wreck, it happened that the Raft, which was destined to carry the greatest number of people, had the least share of the provisions; of wine, indeed, it had more than enough, but not a single barrel of biscuit.

There were five boats; in the first were the Governor of Senegal and his family, in all thirty-five; the second took forty-two persons; the third twenty-eight; the fourth, the long-boat, eighty-eight; the fifth, twenty-five; and the jolly-boat, fifteen, among whom were four children, and some ladies. The military had, in the first instance, been placed upon the raft—the number embarked on this fatal machine was not less than one hundred and fifty; making, with those in the boats, a total of three hundred and ninety-seven.

On leaving the wreck, M. Corréard, geographical engineer, attached to the expedition, who had volunteered to accompany his men on the Raft, wishing to be assured that proper instruments and charts for navigating it had been put on board, was told by the captain that every thing necessary had been provided, and a naval officer appointed to take charge of it; this naval officer, however, jumped into one of the boats, and never joined them.

The boats pushed off in a line, towing the Raft, and assuring the people on board that they would conduct them safely to land. They had not proceeded, however, above two leagues from the wreck, when they, one by one, cast off the tow-lines. It was afterwards pretended that they broke; had this even been true, the boats might at any time have rejoined the Raft; instead of which, they all abandoned it to its fate, every one striving to make off with all possible speed.

At this time, the Raft had sunk below the water to the depth of three feet and a half, and the people were so squeezed one against another, that it was found impossible to move; fore and aft, they were up to the middle in water. In such a deplorable situation, it was with difficulty they could persuade themselves that they had been abandoned; nor would they believe it until the whole of the boats had disappeared from their sight. They now began to consider themselves as deliberately sacrificed, and swore, if ever they gained the shore, to be revenged of their unfeeling companions. The consternation soon became extreme. Every thing that was horrible took possession of their imaginations; all perceived

their destruction to be at hand, and announced by their wailings the dismal thoughts by which they were distracted. The officers, with great difficulty, and by putting on a show of confidence, succeeded in restoring the men to a certain degree of tranquillity, but were themselves overcome with alarm on finding that there was neither chart, nor compass, nor anchor on the Raft. One of the men had fortunately preserved a small pocket-compass, and this little instrument inspired them with so much confidence, that they conceived their safety to depend on it; but this treasure was soon lost to them; it fell from the man's hand, and disappeared between the openings of the Raft.

None of the party had taken any food before they left the ship, and hunger beginning to oppress them, they mixed the biscuit, of which they had about five-and-twenty pounds on board, with wine, and distributed it, in small portions, to each man. They succeeded in erecting a kind of mast, and hoisting one of the royals that had belonged to the frigate.

Night at length came on, the wind freshened, and the sea began to swell; the only consolation now was the belief that they should discover the boats the following morning. About midnight the weather became very stormy; and the waves broke over them in every direction.

During the whole of this night, said the survivors, we struggled against death, holding ourselves closely to the spars which were firmly bound together. Tossed by the waves from one end to the other, and sometimes precipitated into the sea; floating between life and death; mourning over our misfortunes, certain of perishing, yet contending for the remains of existence with that cruel element which menaced to swallow us up; such was our situation till break of day—horrible situation! how shall we convey an idea of it which will not fall far short of the reality!

In the morning the wind abated, and the sea subsided a little; but a dreadful spectacle presented itself—ten or twelve of the unhappy men, having their limbs jammed between the spars of the raft, unable to extricate themselves, had perished in that situation; several others had been swept off by the violence of the waves: in calling over the list it was found that twenty had disappeared.

All this, however, was nothing to the dreadful scene which took place the following night. The day had been beautiful, and no one seemed to doubt that the boats would appear in the course of it, to relieve them from their perilous state; but the evening approached, and none were seen. From that moment a spirit of sedition spread from man to man, and manifested itself by the most furious shouts. Night came on; the heavens were obscured with thick clouds; the wind rose, and with it the sea; the waves broke over them every moment; numbers were swept away, particularly near the extremities of the raft; and the crowding towards the centre of it was so great, that several poor wretches were smothered by the pressure of their comrades, who were unable to keep on their legs.

Firmly persuaded that they were all on the point of being swallowed up, both soldiers and sailors resolved to soothe their last moments by drinking till they lost their reason. They bored a hole in the head of a large cask, from which they continued to swill till the salt water, mixing with the wine, rendered it no longer drinkable. Excited by the fumes, acting on empty stomachs and heads already disordered by danger, they now became deaf to the voice of reason; boldly declared their intention to murder their officers, and then cut the ropes which

bound the Raft together: one of them, seizing an axe, actually began the dreadful work. This was the signal for revolt; the officers rushed forward to quell the tumult, and the man with the hatchet was the first that fell—the stroke of a sabre terminated his existence.

The passengers joined the officers, but the mutineers were still the greater number; luckily they were but badly armed, or the few bayonets and sabres of the opposite party could not have kept them at bay. One fellow was detected secretly cutting the ropes, and immediately flung overboard; others destroyed the shrouds and halyards, and the mast, deprived of support, fell on a captain of infantry, and broke his thigh; he was instantly seized by the soldiers and thrown into the sea, but was saved by the opposite party. A furious charge was now made upon the mutineers, many of whom were cut down: at length this fit of desperation subsided into egregious cowardice: they cried out for mercy, and asked forgiveness on their knees. It was now midnight, and order appeared to be restored; but after an hour of deceitful tranquillity, the insurrection burst forth anew: the mutineers ran upon the officers like desperate men, each having a knife or a sabre in his hand, and such was the fury of the assailants, that they tore their flesh and even their clothes with their teeth: there was no time for hesitation; a general slaughter took place, and the Raft was strewn with dead bodies.

Some palliation must be allowed on account of their miserable condition; the constant dread of death, want of rest and of food, had impaired their faculties; nor did the officers themselves entirely escape. A sort of half-waking dream, a wandering of the imagination, seized most of them: some fancied they saw around them a beautiful country, covered with the most delightful plantations; others became wild with horror, and threw themselves into the sea. Several, on casting themselves off, said calmly to their companions, 'I am going to seek for assistance, and you shall soon see me back again.'

On the return of day it was found, that in the course of the preceding night of horror, sixty-five of the mutineers had perished, and two of the small party attached to the officers. One cask of wine only remained. Before the allowance was served out they contrived to get up their mast afresh; but having no compass, and not knowing how to direct their course, they let the Raft drive before the wind, apparently indifferent whither they went. Enfeebled with hunger, they now tried to catch fish, but could not succeed, and abandoned the attempt.

'It was necessary, however,' said the survivors, 'that some extreme measure should be adopted, to support our miserable existence; we shudder with horror on finding ourselves under the necessity of recording that which we put into practice; we feel the pen drop from our hands; a deadly coldness freezes all our limbs, and our hair stands on end. Readers, we entreat you not to entertain, for men already too unfortunate, a sentiment of indignation; but to grieve for them, and to shed a tear of pity over their unhappy lot.'

The 'extreme measure' was, indeed, horrible: the unhappy men whom death had spared in the course of the night, fell upon the carcasses of the dead, and began to devour them. Some tried to eat their sword-belts and cartridge-boxes; others devoured their linen, and others, the leathers of their hats; but all these expedients, and others of a still more loathsome nature, were of no avail.

A third night of horror now approached; but it

proved to be a night of tranquillity, disturbed only by the piercing cries of those whom hunger and thirst devoured. The water was up to their knees, and they could only attempt to get a little sleep by crowding closely together, so as to form an immovable mass. The morning's sun showed them ten or a dozen unfortunate creatures stretched lifeless on the Raft; all of whom were committed to the deep, with the exception of one, destined for the support of those who, the evening before, had pressed his trembling hands in vowing eternal friendship. At this period, fortunately, a shoal of Flying-fish*, in passing the Raft, left nearly three hundred entangled between the spars. By means of a little gunpowder and linen, and by erecting an empty cask, they contrived to make a fire; and mixing with the fish the flesh of their deceased comrade, they all partook of a meal, which, by this means, was rendered less revolting.

The fourth night was marked by another massacre. Some Spaniards, Italians, and negroes, who had taken no part with the former mutineers, now entered into a conspiracy to throw the rest into the sea. The negroes had persuaded the others that the land was close to them, and that once on shore, they would answer for their crossing Africa without the least danger. A Spaniard was the first to advance with a drawn knife; the sailors seized and threw him into the sea. An Italian, seeing this, jumped overboard; the rest were easily mastered, and order was once more restored.

Thirty persons only now remained, many of whom were in a most deplorable state, the salt-water having entirely removed the skin from their legs and thighs, which, with contusions and wounds, rendered them unable to support themselves. The remains of the fish and the wine were calculated to be just enough to support life for four days; but in these four they also calculated that ships might arrive from St. Louis to save them. At this moment, two soldiers were discovered behind the cask of wine, through which they had bored a hole, for the purpose of drinking it; they had, just before, all pledged themselves to punish with death whoever should be found guilty of such a proceeding, and the sentence was immediately carried into execution, by throwing the culprits into the sea.

Their numbers were thus reduced to twenty-eight, fifteen of whom only appeared to be able to exist for a few days; the other thirteen were so reduced, that they had nearly lost all sense of existence; as their case was hopeless, and as, while they lived, they would consume a part of the little that was left, a council was held, and after a deliberation, at which the most horrible despair is said to have prevailed, it was decided to throw them overboard. 'Three sailors and a soldier undertook the execution of this cruel sentence. We turned away our eyes, and shed tears of blood, on the fate of these unfortunate men; but this painful sacrifice saved the fifteen who remained; and who, after this dreadful catastrophe, had six days of suffering to undergo, before they were relieved from their dismal situation.' At the end of this period, a small vessel was descried at a distance; she proved to be the Argus brig, which had been despatched from Senegal to look out for them. All hearts on board were melted with pity at their deplorable condition.—'Let any one,' say our unfortunate narrators, 'figure to himself fifteen unhappy creatures, almost naked, their bodies shrivelled by the rays of the sun, ten of them scarcely able to move; our limbs stripped of the skin; a total change

in all our features; our eyes hollow and almost savage; and our long beards, which gave us an air almost hideous.

Such is the history of these unfortunate men! Of the hundred and fifty embarked on the Raft, fifteen only were received on board the brig, and of these six died shortly after their arrival at St. Louis.

Of the boats, the whole of which, as we have already stated, deserted the Raft soon after leaving the wreck, two only (those in which the governor and the captain of the frigate had embarked) arrived at Senegal: the other four made the shore in different places, and landed their people. The whole party suffered extremely from hunger, thirst, and the effects of a burning sun reflected from a surface of naked sand; but with the exception of two or three, they all reached Senegal.

The governor, recollecting that the *Méduse* had on board a very large sum of money, sent off a little vessel to visit the wreck; but as if, it should seem, that no one part of this wretched expedition should reflect disgrace upon another, with only eight days' provisions on board; so that she was compelled to return, without being able to approach it. She was again sent out with twenty-five days' provisions, but being ill found in stores and necessaries, and the weather being bad, she returned to port a second time. On the third attempt she reached the wreck, fifty-two days after it had been abandoned; but what were the horror and astonishment of those who ascended its decks, to discover on board three miserable wretches just on the point of expiring!

It now appeared that seventeen men had clung to the wreck when the boats and the Raft departed; their first object had been to collect a sufficient quantity of biscuit, wine, brandy, and pork, for the subsistence of a certain number of days. While this lasted, they were quiet; but forty-two days having passed without any succour appearing, twelve of the most determined, seeing themselves on the point of starving, resolved to make for the land; they therefore constructed a raft, or float, which they bound together with ropes, and on which they set off with a small quantity of provisions, without oars and without sails, and were drowned. Another, who had refused to embark with them, took it into his head, a few days afterwards, to try for the shore; he placed himself in a hen-coop, dropped from the wreck, and at the distance of about half a cable's length from it, sunk to rise no more. The remaining four resolved to die by the wreck; one of them had just expired when the vessel from Senegal arrived; the other three were so exhausted, that a few hours more would have put an end to their misery.

About the time when this dreadful event occurred, the *ALCESTE* frigate, which had been sent by the King of England with an ambassador on a special mission to the Emperor of China, was also wrecked*. But how different were the consequences in the case of the English ship to those which occurred in that of the *Méduse*. The two frigates were wrecked nearly about the same time—the distance from the nearest friendly port pretty nearly the same—in the one case all the people were kept together, in a perfect state of discipline and subordination, and every one brought safely home from the opposite side of the globe;—in the other case, each seems to have been left to shift for himself, and the greater part perished in the horrible way we have just seen.

[Abridged from the *Quarterly Review*, 1817.]

* An account of the wreck of the *Alceste* will be given in the present volume.

THE IMMENSITY OF THE WORKS OF THE CREATOR.

It is extremely difficult to devise any means of conveying to the mind a correct idea of the magnitude of the scale on which the Universe is constructed; of the enormous proportion which the larger dimensions bear to the smaller; and of the amazing number of steps from large to smaller, or from small to larger, which the consideration of it offers. The following comparative representations may serve to give the reader, to whom the subject is new, some notion of these steps.

If we suppose the Earth to be represented by a globe a foot in diameter, the distance of the Sun from the earth would be about two miles, the diameter of a sphere representing the Sun, on the same supposition, would be something above one hundred feet, and consequently his bulk such as might be made up of two hemispheres, each about the size of the dome of St. Paul's. The Moon would be thirty feet from us, and her diameter three inches, about that of a cricket ball. Thus the Sun would much more than occupy all the space within the Moon's orbit. On the same scale, Jupiter would be above ten miles from the Sun, and Uranus (Herschel's planet) forty. We see, then, how thinly scattered through space are the heavenly bodies. The fixed stars will be at an unknown distance, but, probably, if all distances were thus diminished, no star would be nearer to such a one-foot Earth, than the Moon now is to us, which is 240,000 miles distant from us.

On such a terrestrial globe, the highest mountains would be about one eightieth part of an inch high, and, consequently, only just distinguishable. We may imagine, therefore, how imperceptible would be the largest animals. The whole organized covering of such an earth would be quite undiscoverable by the eye, except, perhaps, by colour, like the bloom on a plum.

In order to restore the earth and its inhabitants to their true dimensions, we must magnify the length, breadth, and thickness of every part of our supposed models forty millions of times; and to preserve the proportions, we must increase equally the distance of the sun and of the stars from us. They seem thus to pass off into infinity; yet each of them thus removed, has its system of mechanical, and, perhaps, organic processes going on upon its surface.

But the arrangements of organic life which we can see with the naked eye are few, compared with those which the microscope detects. We know that we may magnify objects thousands of times, and still discover fresh complexities of structure; if we suppose, therefore, that we thus magnify every member of the universe, and every particle of matter of which it consists; we may imagine that we make perceptible to our senses, the vast multitude of organized adaptations which lie hid on every side of us; and in this manner we approach towards an estimate of the extent through which we may trace the power and skill of the Creator, by scrutinizing his work with the utmost subtlety of our faculties.

Those magnitudes and proportions which leave our powers of conception far behind—that ever-expanding view which is brought before us, of the scale and mechanism, the riches and magnificence, the population and activity of the universe—may reasonably serve to enlarge and elevate our conceptions of the Maker and Master of all; to feed an ever-growing admiration of his wonderful nature; and to excite a desire to be able to contemplate more steadily, and conceive less inadequately the scheme of his government and the operation of his power.

L. C.

THE ARROWS, NEAR BOROUGHBIDGE, YORKSHIRE.



THE THREE COLUMNS, CALLED THE DEVIL'S ARROWS.

THESE are three large obelisks, standing about half a mile south-west of Boroughbridge. They are irregular in form, and greatly worn by exposure to the weather, and are of very ancient origin. In the time of our famous antiquary Leland, who began his travels through England, in 1536, there were four of these stones, but one has since fallen, or been pulled down*. The three now remaining, stand nearly in a line from north to south. The northernmost obelisk is eighteen feet high, and is supposed to weigh thirty-six tons; the centre stone, twenty-two feet and a half high, is estimated at thirty tons; and the third, twenty-two feet four inches high, is also thought to weigh thirty tons.

These extraordinary monuments of antiquity did not escape the notice of the greatest of all English antiquaries, Camden, who visited Yorkshire in 1582, and who imagined that they were compositions of sand, lime, and small pebbles, cemented together. He was probably deceived by their vast bulk, not conceiving it possible for human art to bring such masses of stone, each being a single block, from any long distance. But it is now well known that they are natural stones, of a kind common in the north of England, called the coarse rag-stone, or mill-stone grit; and it is fair to conclude, that they were brought from a quarry at Plumpton, near Harrowgate. HARGROVE, in his *History of Knaresborough*, in describing Plumpton, says, "One huge mass of rock, insulated by water, which measures near fifty feet in length, without a joint, shows the possibility of finding obelisks here, even higher than those at Boroughbridge, which are believed to have been carried from hence, as being of the same grit."

In the year 1709, the ground about the centre obelisk was opened to the width of nine feet. At first a good soil was found, and at about a foot deep was a quantity of rough stones and large pebbles; layers of these appeared, which were probably placed there, to keep it steady; beneath, was a strong and hard clay supporting the bottom of the obelisk, at above six feet below the surface of the earth. It has never been determined by what people or for what object these stones were erected, although the point has engaged the attention of many ingenious men. Stukeley's idea is, that they were fixed by the Britons, long before the time of the Romans;

* Camden states that one was displaced in hopes of finding money.

he imagines, that in this place the Druids held a great yearly festival, like the famous Grecian games, and that these were the goals round which the chariots were turned at the races. Another author suggests, that they were set up by the early Britons to the honour of their gods. But the opinions of Leland, Camden, and Drake, seem to be better founded; namely, that they were the work of the Romans, and raised to commemorate some important victory. The last mentioned writer remarks, "the foundations of these stones being laid with the same clay and pebble as the walls of Aldburgh, the ancient Isurium of the Romans, is a convincing proof of their being Roman monuments."

Aldburgh is not a mile and a half distant from Boroughbridge, and when, in addition to the fact stated by Drake, we consider the facilities possessed by the Romans, for conveyance on their great military roads, together with their fondness for raising records to their own honour, we cannot but consider them as belonging to the time of the Romans. It is true that they bear no marks of Roman elegance, nor the traces of any inscription: yet these, if any such existed, may probably, have been worn away by time and the weather. Dean Gale had a notion that they were originally those Mercuries described by the ancients, which were usually placed where four ways met (as they did here,) and that the head on the top of the stones had been displaced. Amidst so many theories on the subject of the Arrows, or Boroughbridge Obelisks, we will leave those of our readers, who are curious in such matters, to consult the authorities quoted; and, notwithstanding the title by which these stones are commonly known in the country, (the devil's arrows,) we are sure that they will agree in rejecting one ancient opinion, quaintly enough adverted to by Camden in his *Britannia*. "As for the silly story of their being those bolts which the devil shot at some cities hereabouts, and so destroyed them, I think it not worth while to mention it."

At Rudston, about five miles from Bridlington, in the same county, is a similar obelisk, upwards of twenty-nine feet high. Its depth in the ground has been traced more than twelve feet without coming to the bottom. It stands forty miles from any quarry where this sort of stone is found, and neither history nor tradition has any record either of its date or of the cause of its erection.

ON TIME.

It has been well said, "If you would know the value of a guinea, try to borrow one of a stranger:" we would add, if you would know the value of Time, place yourself for a moment in imagination on the brink of eternity. Suppose some dreadful accident to have happened to you, by which your days are numbered; that you are suddenly thrown upon a sick bed, and your physician tells you, you have only a few days to live. Do you think that any desire would come upon you to borrow (if we may so express it) a few days more. If so, what would be your hope of obtaining them? Or what your state of mind on finding that the riches of the whole world, were they at that moment under your control, could not purchase the boon for you, and that, consequently, you must go without it? In the case of the guinea, you know that the difficulty is great, but you also know that there is a possibility, that by importunity and perseverance, you may succeed in obtaining the loan of half or a lesser portion, and so will not go without it altogether. Is it so with Time? Oh, but you say, Time is altogether a different thing; our time is always our own, and as long as we have health and strength, it only rests with ourselves to lay it out in whatever way we please; that is a matter which we can always control. Just so; and this is the point where we all err. Did we but carry this great truth always in view, and not be satisfied with stopping here, but following it up in its consequences, we venture to predict, that the result would be very different to what it is.

We will not now stop to inquire the relative proportion of value, which the two talents of Time and Money bear to each other; it is sufficient for our present purpose, that it is in both cases very great, and as the value of one is sufficiently familiar to us, we will suppose that of the other, to be at least equal, and we shall have no difficulty in illustrating the subject. Now, without going too deeply into the matter, we all know that the object of these being placed in our hands is, that they should be laid out in such a way, as to produce as large a return for the future as possible; hence it happens, that every prudent man in making a purchase, considers first, what prospect is held out of making an advantage of his money, or, to speak in the common phrase, "what he will have to show for it." Again, in lending money at interest, he will not be satisfied with a lower rate, if he thinks he can obtain a higher, or he will even take usurious interest if he can get it; in short, his only desire is to make the most of his money, and the consequence is, that when the day of reckoning comes, and he is called upon to make good a loss, which has come upon him suddenly, he has wherewith to pay; he is not plunged into the difficulty of making an unsuccessful attempt, to borrow of a stranger to make up his deficiency, or of submitting to go to prison, as must be the case with an improvident man, whose conduct we will suppose to have been the reverse of what we have stated.

Let us now apply this illustration to the case of Time: do you see no similarity in the two cases? Your time you admit is, even with the busiest, to a certain extent, your own. Every one of us must allow that there are a thousand ways in which it may be laid out with a *certainly* of producing a return; possibly, a usurious return. You are content, however, to know, that the means are always within your reach; it is a loan you can always make, whenever your interest or your inclination impels

you to it; for the present you are content to live on the principal; it will last your life, or at all events, when it is drawing to a close, it will be time enough for you to bestir yourself; the means are *always* at hand. But the day of reckoning comes unexpectedly; it is, perhaps, heavy; the amount to be made up is large; the time short; it may be (dare we think it!) a few hours; you look into your account, and a frightful deficiency stares you in the face; you have always imagined that at most you had only to answer for the omission of having neglected to lay out your talent in such a way as would have enabled you to meet your present deficiency; the appalling truth strikes you, for the first time, that you have done more. You have borrowed from eternity, and unconsciously incurred a debt which it is utterly out of your power to pay; you have not only omitted to do that which you were required to do, but you have done that which it would take a long and laborious life to repair; and you have a few short hours to do it!

Think of these things, reader; think of them when, without any intention of committing a wilful sin, you engage in a work, having, it may be, no particular good or evil for its object; say to yourself, "Am I laying out this hour in such a way as will repay me with future advantage?" be candid with yourself, and we venture to hope that you will, at least, pause before you deliberately incur the responsibility of a waste of time, which is forcibly described by your excellent poet Cowper, as no better than

Dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up.

H. H.

AMONG other instructive lessons with which the book of Job abounds, we have a lively instance of the weakness and insecurity of our condition, unless the watchful eye and hand of Providence be over us, to guard us against the dangers and miseries that surround us, and are ready to break in upon us. No sooner did the Almighty see fit, for the trial and exercise of this good man's virtues, to remove the hedge that was set about him for his defence, than men and devils invade his happiness. His greedy neighbours spoil his goods, and slay his servants; fire from heaven consumes the rest; a wind from the desert overturns the house where his sons and daughters were all feasting together, and buries his children in its ruin. His person is next attacked, and his body smitten with sore and grievous boils, from the crown of his head, to the sole of his feet. And the patriarch became at once childless, destitute, and afflicted, who, the day before, was famous among the people of the East, for his prosperity and the glory of his house.

The calamities which Job suffered, were indeed uncommon. But what was it that rendered them so? It was because God, in his wisdom, was pleased to suspend for a while the *ordinary* protection of his Providence; and not because any *new* evils were called up from the bottomless pit, on purpose to torment him. The terror by night, the arrow that flieth by day, the pestilence that walketh in darkness, the destruction that wasteth at noon-day, are always ready to invade us, as they did him, but that the Almighty controls their fury. For the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, are his.

These considerations leave no room for confidence in the arm of flesh; at the same time, they remove all just ground of anxiety and disquiet, while we so live, as to make God our friend! without whose permission, nothing sad or disastrous can befall us. And, although we may expect to meet trials, for this life is a state of trial, and we see that the good and righteous have their afflictions, yet, under a sense of God's disposing and overruling providence, we have no reason to be cast down: nay, we have all reason to the contrary, whatever may befall us: since, what is appointed by Him, must be wisely and graciously appointed; either to correct and amend what is amiss, or to try and exercise what is good, in his servants; for their improvement in grace, and preparation for glory.—TOWNSON.

PREJUDICE.

THOSE who are prejudiced or enthusiastic, live, and move, and think, and act, in an atmosphere of their own conformation. The delusion so produced is sometimes deplorable, sometimes ridiculous, always remediless. No events are too great, or too little, to be construed by such persons into peculiar or providential corroboratives, or consequences of their own morbid hallucinations. An old maiden lady, who was a most determined espouser of the cause of the Pretender, happened to be possessed of a beautiful canary-bird, whose vocal powers were the annoyance of one half of the neighbourhood, and the admiration of the other. Lord Peterborough was very solicitous to procure this bird, as a present to a lady who had set her heart on being mistress of this little musical wonder. Neither his lordship's entreaties, nor his bribes could prevail; but so able a negotiator was not to be easily foiled. He took an opportunity of changing the bird, and of substituting another in its cage, during some lucky moment, when its vigilant protectress was off her guard. The changeling was precisely like the original, except in that particular respect which alone constituted its value; it was a perfect mute, and had more taste for seeds than for songs. Immediately after this manoeuvre, that battle which utterly ruined the hopes of the Pretender took place. A decent interval had elapsed, when his lordship summoned up resolution to call again on the old lady: in order to smother all suspicion of the trick he had played upon her, he was about to affect a great anxiety for the possession of the bird; she saved him all trouble on that score by anticipating, as she thought, his errand, exclaiming, "O ho! my Lord, then you are come again, I presume, to coax me out of my dear little idol, but it is all in vain, he is now dearer to me than ever; I would not part with him for his cage full of gold. Would you believe it, my lord? From the moment that his gracious sovereign was defeated, the sweet little fellow has not uttered a single note!"

"In passing through Mitre Alley, the eye is attracted by an angular sign-board, projecting from the wall, on which is the following inscription. "Domestic medicine prescribed from Irish manuscripts," and a couplet of Irish poetry follows. Attracted by this notice, we visited the doctor, in the hope of meeting with those Irish manuscripts from which he derived his prescriptions. Nor were we disappointed. We found an old man of a genuine Milesian aspect, possessed of seventy-three very old volumes of vellum, bound in modern covers. They contained several thousand receipts in Latin and Irish, written in a beautiful but very old Irish character. From this ancient repertory, the doctor collected all his knowledge of the healing art, and practised to some extent among the poor of his vicinity. —*History of Dublin.* L. C.

An upright posture is easier than a stooping one, because it is more natural, and one part is better supported by another; so it is easier to be an honest man than a knave. —SKELTON.

ARABIAN TALE.

THE ignorant have often given credit to the wise, for powers that are permitted to none, merely because the wise have made a proper use of those powers that are permitted to all. A little Arabian tale of THE DERVISE will show how this may happen.

A dervise was journeying alone in the desert, when two merchants suddenly met him:—"You have lost a camel," said he to the merchants. "Indeed we have," they replied. "Was he not blind in his right eye, and lame in his left leg?" said the dervise. "He was," replied the merchants. "And was he not loaded with honey on one side, and wheat on the other?" "Most certainly he was," they replied, "and as you have seen him so lately, and marked him so particularly, we pray you to conduct us to him."

"My friends," said the dervise, "I have never seen your camel, nor ever heard of him but from you." "A pretty story, truly," said the merchants; "but where are the jewels which formed a part of his cargo?" "I have neither seen your camel nor your jewels," repeated the dervise.

On this they seized his person, and forthwith hurried him before a justice, where, on the strictest search, nothing could be found upon him, either of falsehood or of theft.

They were then about to proceed against him as a sorcerer, when the dervise, with great calmness, thus addressed the court.

"I have been much pleased with your surprise, and own that there has been some ground for your suspicions; but I have lived long, and alone; and I can find ample scope for observation, even in a desert. I knew that I had crossed the track of a camel that had strayed from its owner, because I saw no mark of any human footstep on the same route. I knew that the animal was blind in one eye, because it had cropped the herbage only on one side of its path; and I perceived that it was lame in one leg, from the faint impression which that particular foot had produced upon the sand. I concluded that the animal had lost one tooth, because, wherever it had grazed, a small tuft of herbage was left uninjured in the centre of its bite. As to that which formed the burden of the beast, the busy ants informed me that it was corn on the one side, and the clustering flies that it was honey on the other." —COLTON

A TRAVELLING man, one winter's evening, laid himself down upon the platform of a lime-kiln, placing his feet, probably benumbed with cold, upon the heap of stones, newly put on to burn through the night. Sleep overcame him in this situation, the fire gradually rising and increasing, until it ignited the stones upon which his feet were placed. Lulled by the warmth, the man slept on; the fire increased until it burned one foot, (which probably was extended over a vent-hole,) and part of the leg above the ankle entirely off, consuming that part so effectually, that a cinder-like fragment was alone remaining, and still the wretch slept on! and in this state was found by the kilnmen in the morning. Insensible to any pain, and ignorant of his misfortune, he attempted to rise and pursue his journey; but, missing his shoe, requested to have it found, and when he was raised, putting his burnt limb to the ground to support his body, the extremity of his leg-bone crumbled into fragments, having been calcined into lime. Still he expressed no sense of pain, and probably experienced none, from the gradual operation of the fire, and his own torpidity, during the hours his foot was consuming. This poor drover survived his misfortunes in the hospital about a fortnight; but the fire having extended to other parts of his body, recovery was hopeless. —*Journal of a Naturalist.*

THE heart may be engaged in a little business, as much, if thou watch it not, as in many and great affairs. A man may drown in a little brook or pool, as well as in a great river, if he lie down and plunge himself into it, and put his head under water. Some care thou must have, that thou mayest not care. Those things that are thorns indeed, thou must make a hedge of them, to keep out those temptations that accompany sloth, and extreme want that waits on it; but let them be the hedge: suffer them not to grow within the garden. —COLERIDGE.

THE MIRAGE.

THE first march from Abusheher we had to pass over a desert plain of considerable extent, on which I amused myself by watching narrowly the various changes, as we were near or remote from it, of that singular vapour, called by the French MIRAGE, and by the Arabs and Persians SIRAB.

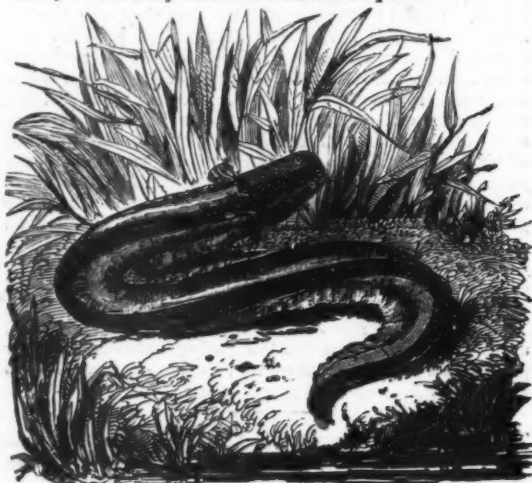
The influence of this vapour in changing the figure of objects is very extraordinary; it sometimes gives to those seen through it the most fantastical shapes, and, as a general effect, it always appears to elevate, and make objects seem much taller than they really are. A man, for instance, seen through it at the distance of a mile and a half upon the level plain, appears to be almost as tall as a date-tree.

Its resemblance to water is complete, and justifies all the metaphors of poets, and their tales of thirsty and deluded travellers.

The most singular quality of this vapour is its power of reflection. When a near observer is a little elevated, as on horseback, he will see trees and other objects reflected as from the surface of a lake. The vapour, when seen at a distance of six or seven miles, appears to lie upon the earth like an opaque mass; and it certainly does not rise many feet above the ground, for I observed that, while the lower part of the town of Abusheher was hid from the view, some of the more elevated buildings, and the tops of a few date-trees, were distinctly visible. —*Sketches of Persia.*

THE GYMNOTUS, OR ELECTRIC EEL.

THE Gymnoti, or Electrical Eels, which resemble large water serpents, inhabit several streams of South America, and abound also in the Oroonoko, the Amazon, and the Meta, but the strength of the current, and the depth of the water in these large rivers, prevent their being caught by the Indians. They see these fish less frequently than they feel electric shocks from them, when swimming or bathing in the river. To catch the Gymnoti with nets is very difficult, on account of the extreme agility of the fish, which bury themselves in the mud like serpents. Roots are sometimes thrown into the water to intoxicate or benumb these animals, but we would not employ these means, as they would have enfeebled the gymnoti: the Indians, therefore, told us, that they would "fish with horses." We found it difficult to form an idea of this extraordinary manner of fishing; but we soon saw our guides return from the savannah, which they had been scouring for wild horses and mules. They brought about thirty with them, which they forced to enter the pool.



THE GYMNOTUS.

The extraordinary noise caused by the horses' hoofs, makes the fish issue from the mud, and excites them to combat; they swim on the surface of the water, and crowd under the bellies of the horses and mules. A contest between animals of so different an organization, furnishes a very striking spectacle. The Indians, provided with harpoons and long slender reeds, surround the pool closely; and some climb upon the trees, the branches of which extend horizontally over the surface of the water. By their wild cries, and the length of their reeds, they prevent the horses from running away, and reaching the bank of the pool. The eels, stunned by the noise, defend themselves by the repeated discharge of their electric power, and during a long time they seem to prove victorious. Several horses sink beneath the violence of the invisible strokes, which they receive from all sides, and stunned by the force and frequency of the shocks, disappear under the water. Others, panting, with mane erect, and haggard eyes, expressing anguish, raise themselves, and endeavour to flee from the storm by which they are overtaken. They are driven back by the Indians into the middle of the water; but a small number succeed in eluding the active vigilance of the fishermen. These regain the shore, stumbling at every step, and stretch themselves on the sand, exhausted with fatigue, and their limbs benumbed by the electric shocks of the gymnoti. In less than five minutes two horses were drowned. The eel being five feet

long, and pressing itself against the belly of the horses, makes a discharge along the whole extent of its electric organ. The horses are probably only stunned, not killed, but they are drowned from the impossibility of rising, amid the prolonged struggles between the other horses and the eels.

We had little doubt, that the fishing would terminate by killing, successively, all the animals engaged; but, by degrees, the impetuosity of this unequal contest diminished, and the wearied gymnoti dispersed. The mules and horses appeared less frightened; their manes no longer bristled, and their eyes expressed less dread. The Gymnoti, which require a long rest and abundant nourishment to repair what they have lost of galvanic force, approach timidly the edge of the marsh, where they are taken by means of small harpoons, fastened to long cords.

The Gymnotus is the largest of electrical fishes; I measured some that were from five to five feet three inches long, and the Indians assert that they have seen still longer. We found that a fish of three feet ten inches long weighed twelve pounds; the transverse diameter of the body was three inches five lines. The Gymnoti of Cano de Bera are of a fine olive-green; the under part of the head is yellow, mingled with red. Along the back are two rows of small yellow spots, from which exudes a slimy matter that spreads over the skin of the animal, and which, as Volta has proved, conducts electricity twenty or thirty times better than pure water. It is, in general, somewhat remarkable, that no electrical fish yet discovered in the different parts of the world, is covered with scales.

The Gymnoti, which are objects of the most lively interest to the philosopher of Europe, are dreaded and detested by the natives. Their flesh furnishes pretty good food, but the electric organ fills the greater part of the body, and this being slimy and disagreeable to the taste, is carefully separated from the rest. The presence of the Gymnoti is also considered as the principal cause of the want of fish in the ponds and pools of the Llanos, where they kill many more fish than they devour. The Indians told us, that when they take young alligators and gymnoti at the same time in very strong nets, the latter never display the slightest trace of a wound, because they disable the young alligators before they are attacked by them. All the inhabitants of the waters dread the Gymnoti; lizards, tortoises, and frogs, seek the pools, where they are secure from their action. It became necessary to change the direction of a road near Uritucu, because these electrical eels were so numerous in one river, that they every year killed a great number of mules of burden as they forded the river.

It would be temerity to expose ourselves to the first shocks of a very large and strongly irritated Gymnotus. If by chance you receive a stroke before the fish is wounded, or wearied by a long pursuit, the pain and numbness are so violent, that it is impossible to describe the nature of the feeling they excite. I do not remember having ever received from the discharge of an electrical machine, a more dreadful shock, than that which I experienced by imprudently placing both my feet on a Gymnotus just taken out of the water. I was affected the rest of the day with a violent pain in the knees, and in almost every joint.

[HUMBOLDT'S *Personal Narrative*.]

LONDON:

JOHN WILLIAM PARKER, WEST STRAND.

PUBLISHED IN WEEKLY NUMBERS, PRICE ONE PENNY, AND IN MONTHLY PARTS.

PRICE SIXPENCE, AND

Sold by all Booksellers and News-venders in the Kingdom.